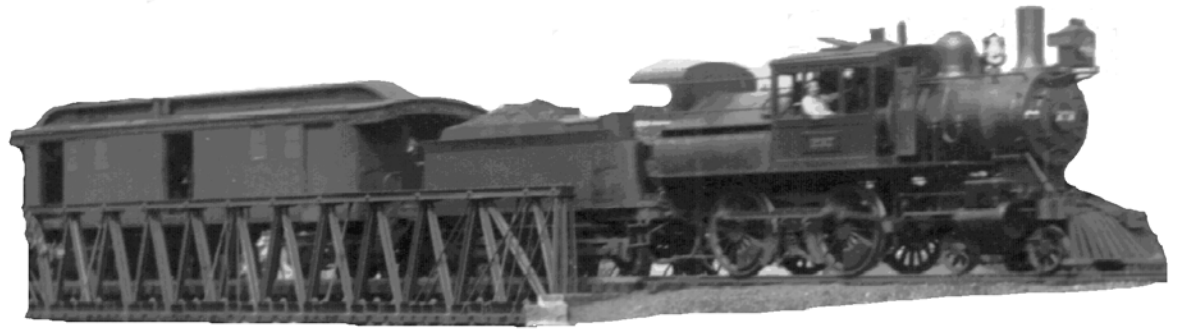




*Pottstown & Reading  
Chapter, NRHS Inc.*



# THE COLEBROOKDALE LOCAL

Volume 35, Number 3

January 2008



FP7A's #903 and #902 in excursion service between Pennsburg and Vera Cruz, last October. After the trips were completed, the locomotives were parked on a siding near Brown Printing Co. in Upper Hanover Twp. Sometime between November 3-4, the K5LA horns were stolen and have not been recovered. On Wednesday, 12/19, NS #3039 made a light engine move (#961), taking the units to Allentown, then onto Reading, Enola, and are now stored in the yard at the Railroaders Museum of Pennsylvania, Strasburg, for the winter. Tentative plans are to eventually move them to the Reading Company Tech's facilities in Hamburg.

The #902 and #903 were originally released from EMD's LaGange shops on June 1, 1950. After the Reading acquired their RDC's, they started to dispose of the FP7A's and they were used on push/pull service between Reading and Philadelphia until SEPTA took ownership of the train in 1974. By 1978, SEPTA repainted the train in a red, white, and blue scheme and the units were retired in 1981. In 1983, #902 was purchased by the Lancaster Chapter and the #903 was purchased by the Philadelphia Chapter. By 1986, restoration had begun and they were repainted into their present colors and finally dedicated in 1995. (Photo: Roy Miller)

Our next scheduled meeting will take place on Thursday, January 24, 2008, at our present meeting location - the Exeter Bible Church's cafeteria - Off Route 422 in Exeter behind the Sheetz. After the meeting, a video on the Great Northern will be shown.

In the event of snow, sleet, or freezing rain on a scheduled meeting night, tune into radio stations WEEU 830AM, WRFY 102.5FM, or FRANK 107.5FM for cancellation information.

Redner's Warehouse Markets has issued new "Save-A-Tape" cards - just stop at the Courtesy Counter to pick one up. In the past, the old cards gave some problems with certain stores and the self checkouts. The new cards are supposed to be more user friendly.

#### From The President:

We sure had plenty of nice mild weather this Fall and into Winter to enjoy the outdoors. Now that the year end holidays are beyond us, and the hours of daylight are getting longer each day, its time to think about the upcoming activities that we can get involved with that relate to railroading.

The annual election of officers occurred at the November meeting with all being reelected, except for a vacancy for the editor of our newsletter. We are hoping someone will seriously consider taking over this very important part of our Chapter. Please contact Dick White for more information, or yours truly.

At our November meeting, our 2007 RailCamper that we sponsored, Nathan Mengel, and Barry Smith the Senior Vice-President and Director of the RailCamp programs provided us with a very informative evening. This event put on by the NRHS has been an excellent program for getting young people in involved with future employment in a railroad, tourist or shortline railroad, or a railroad related industry. If you know of a young person interested in RailCamp, we would be glad to sponsor them, if they meet Chapters qualifications?

In case you did not renew your membership, I am reminding you that the annual membership renewal time continues, even though the membership year ended December 31, 2007. Do not let your membership lapse. Let's try to have 100% renewal for 2008.

How about making a New Years Resolution to attend more of our monthly meetings than you attended in 2007. We sure would like to see at the meetings. This is your Chapter, so we look forward to you joining us. Good programs are planned for the coming year on the 4th Thursday of each month.

I attended the resurrection service to honor Larry Eastwood's mother, Dorothy, on Sunday, January 13, 2008. She was 91 years old.

See you at the upcoming meetings in 2008.

John D. Sweigart, President

#### From the Raffle Guy:

We kick off 2008 with a new raffle item which is a railroad DVD. The town of Rochelle is located in Illinois. It has be a hot bed of train activity for many years. The DVD by Greg Scholl Video Productions, it titled "Rochelle Double Track Diamonds". It is an action packed production. As always, a ticket is priced at \$1 a piece, with all proceeds going into the chapter Treasury. We will sell tickets at the January and February meeting, and also at the Banquet in March. At the Banquet we will pick the winner. Please plan on attending the Banquet because we will have a door prize to give away, along with other raffle items.

Thank you! -Wayne Blattner

Election of Officers took place at the November 29th meeting. For 2008, your officers will remain the same:

President: John Sweigart

Vice President: Bill Reber

Secretary Rich White II

Treasurer: Charles Weber Jr.

Historian: Dean Kaiser

National Director: John Sweigart

Meeting dates have also been established for 2008 - also a partial listing of upcoming programs::

January 24 - Great Northern video - VHS from Manny Reider  
February 28 - Steel & Ice - Trolley Days of Winter  
March 29 - SPRING BANQUET - Rich Frey (see flyer)  
April 24 - Boston & Main or Reading at Takeover by Roy Miller  
May 22 - #611 VHS from Jim Von Neida  
June 26 - proposed WK&S trip  
July 24  
August 28  
September 13 - FALL BANQUET - PRR's experience with remote control locomotives by Allen Keller  
October 23  
December 4 - Railcamp presentation?

## RAIL NEWS

Norfolk Southern is evaluating the use of wind power at the southeastern corner of the Enola yards. The wind turbine would stand up to 225' high and would provide power for a new wastewater treatment plant. The proposed site would be across the river from the state capital in East Pennsboro Twp. Potential problems could be that it would be located near a legally protected bird sanctuary on Wade Island and possibly be a threat to the island's bird population. NS will not make a decision until a feasibility study is completed (NS Newswire). NS is currently constructing a 50kW wind turbine to power a wastewater treatment plant at its yards in Bellevue, OH.

Norfolk Southern is rebuilding the old Thurlow Yard on the east side of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor at Marcus Hook, PA. The yard will be made up of seven tracks, double-ended to hold Sunoco, Phillips, and Epsilon cars previously stored at the Edgemoor yards. NS will put on a new crew that will be based in Edgemoor, work the yard overnight and do a second interchange with Conrail's Stoney Creek yard.

At least ten new NS GEVO's have been sighted at Bellevue Yard early this year. #7691, 7693, 7696, and 7701 have been spotted still in primer. It is also noted that the cable for ECP operation is located next to the trainline hose.

Work has begun on Norfolk Southern's Heartland Corridor project which will, when completed, allow double stack trains (20'9" min clearance) to run from Hampton Roads, VA, to Chicago. Currently, double-stack trains must take longer routes either by Harrisburg or Knoxville, TN. Clearances have been increased in 28 tunnels with some tunnels as short as 174' and up to 3302'. In addition, seven overhead railroad bridges, three overhead bridges, three signal bridges, and three sets of overhead transmission wires will have to be raised. The project is expected to be completed by mid-2010.

The Railroaders Memorial Museum in Altoona has hired Salone Management Group of DuBois, PA (SMG) to replace CEO Scott Cessna to run its operations. SMG runs several businesses in Altoona and State College, along with several other engineering and fabrication firms. This past summer, SMG managed concerts that were held in the museum yard. SMG will be responsible for fundraising, membership acquisition, grants, maintenance, and staffing. They will also inherit two unfinished projects - the restoration of the PRR K-4 #1361 and the construction of a quarter roundhouse in the yard. After spending nearly \$3 million, the K-4 is still in "much assembly required" form at Steamtown, awaiting shipment to Altoona.

The new video webcam is in operation at Harris Tower in Harrisburg. You can access it at [www.trainorders.com](http://www.trainorders.com) and under video cameras, click on "Harris Tower". You do not have to subscribe to trainorders to view stills from the cameras. The webmaster from Trainorders.com concedes that sensing is especially difficult on multiple-track arrangements and the camera is triggered by movement on the videos. The black rectangular image of an NS locomotive tends to blend in with the background. It also takes 5-8 minutes to compress and process the video clip so anything immediately passing after a capture will be missed. A new lens is to be installed which should improve the sensing of black locomotives.

The Pennsylvania State Transportation Commission has approved grants totaling \$20 million to help seven railroads and five businesses undergo rail-freight improvements, stimulate economic development, and reduce traffic congestion. Some in our area include:

- CSX Transportation will receive \$3.33 million to improve overhead clearances to allow double stack trains to and from Philadelphia (16 locations).
- RBM&N will receive \$2.5 million for construction of the Nesquehoning Bridge over the Lehigh River outside of Jim Thorpe, completing the connection of their Lehigh Division and Carbon & Schuylkill Branch.
- Clinton Counties Renovo Rail Industries will receive \$630,000 for rail upgrades.
- SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority will receive \$1.5 million for track rehab for the intermodal facility at the Newberry Yard and for construction of a bulk transfer facility for food products, plastics, and other commodities. They will also receive \$1.33 million for track rehab and construction on their Juniata Valley RR's West Park Track to serve a new plant in the Mifflin County Industrial Park.

Freightliner Group Ltd., a London, UK-based group, has ordered 30 freight locomotives from GE Transportation, making it the largest order in the company's history. The new locomotives, called "Project Genesis", will include AC traction technology and dynamic braking. The 129-ton locomotives will be designated JS37AC, and will allow greater hauling capacity while lowering fuel consumption by approx. 10% over the current locomotives in its fleet.

Greenbrier Co and the Rail Services division of GE Equipment Service will supply 11,900 tank cars and covered hoppers for Rail Services over an eight-year period with tank cars making up the majority of the orders. The initial order is for 30,000 gallon non-coiled/non-insulated tank cars for ethanol, methanol, and more than 60 other commodities. Delivery of the first 3,400 cars is slated for the 3rd quarter of 2008, with the balance by early 2011. As part of the agreement, Greenbrier will install GE's VeriWise Rail Fleet management technology on the cars during the manufacturing process. This equipment generates information about the cars location and environmental conditions inside for customers to evaluate.

Freight Car America, Inc., has announced that they will close their Johnstown plant in mid-December 2007. The administrative offices will remain open at that location. 390 workers will be affected. The action is in line with FCA's strategy of optimizing production at its low-cost manufacturing facilities. The company expects its two plants in Danville, IL and Roanoke, VA, to be sufficient for meeting its orders for the next several years. In addition to coal cars, FCA designs and builds bulk commodity cars, flat cars, mill gondolas, coiled steel cars, intermodal cars, and multi-level vehicle carriers.

## - Coming Events -

### March 15

Harrisburg Chapter's 22nd Annual Railroad Show and Collectors Market at the I.W. Abel Union Hall, 200 Gibson St., Steelton, PA.  
For more info, call 717-732-3867.

### June 16-22

NRHS Convention in Dallas/Fort Worth, TX, hosted by the North Texas Chapter, NRHS. More details to follow.

Circus Train activity in the area: The "Red Train" will be in State College 4/24-27. The 61-62 car "Blue Train" will be in Philadelphia 4/16-27, Hershey 5/21-26, and Wilkes Barre 5/29-6/1. RBB&B Operations are on your scanner at 151.625



From your editor:

Back in February, 1991, I took on the job as editor of the Colebrookdale Local with the intent of staying on for five or so years. Next month it will be 17 years and, with the help of my son Rich II, we have put out nearly 180 issues.

In the early years, I could count on articles/information from our members, but for the past several years not much has been forthcoming. I don't know if you don't get out trackside, take trips/excursions, etc, but putting the "Local" together has been a real problem without contributions from the membership.

Various health events, a grandchild, and Rich's increased job responsibilities have prompted me to give up the position. I made note of this at last January's meeting and agreed to stay on in 2007 in hopes that someone would take over. I had hoped to help in the transition period. But no one seems to want to be bothered. So, this issue will be my second-to-last issue of the Local. I will try to keep the membership informed on upcoming events with postcards and flyers if necessary until a new editor can be found.

Dick White

The COLEBROOKDALE LOCAL is the official newsletter of the Pottstown & Reading Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, Inc. The NRHS is a non-profit organization for historical and educational purposes. Opinions expressed are those of the writers and/or contributors and not of the Chapter or Society. Members are encouraged to submit railroading related articles or items of interest for possible inclusion in future issues. Monthly deadline for each issue is the 5th. Items of interest should be addressed to Richard White, 918 Charles St., Reading, PA 19606-3708. Phone (610)-582-1437, Fax # (610)-404-0666, E-MAIL: ewewhite@juno.com (Editor) or rwhite2@dejazzd.com (Rich White). Chapter web site: [www.rrsignal.com/nrhs](http://www.rrsignal.com/nrhs)

Dick Freeze, our program chairperson, is asking for your help in determining what types of programs you would like to see at future meetings. The short survey below, when completed, can be either handed to Dick at a meeting or sent to him at: Richard Freeze, 232 Bradley Ave., Sinking Spring, PA, 19608, or returned with your banquet reservation, which happens to be on the opposite side of this page..

What would you like to see:

1) Style of presentation:      Speaker      Slides      DVD/VHS      Other (Specify):

2) Length of program:      30 min      45 min      60 min      Other:

3) Topics:      Railroad      Trolley      Local History      Other:

4) I suggest programs on the following:

5) I am will to present a program on:

Name:

Address:

Phone:

6) Other comments:

Thanks for your help!

